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Nation

La Fontaine: La Return



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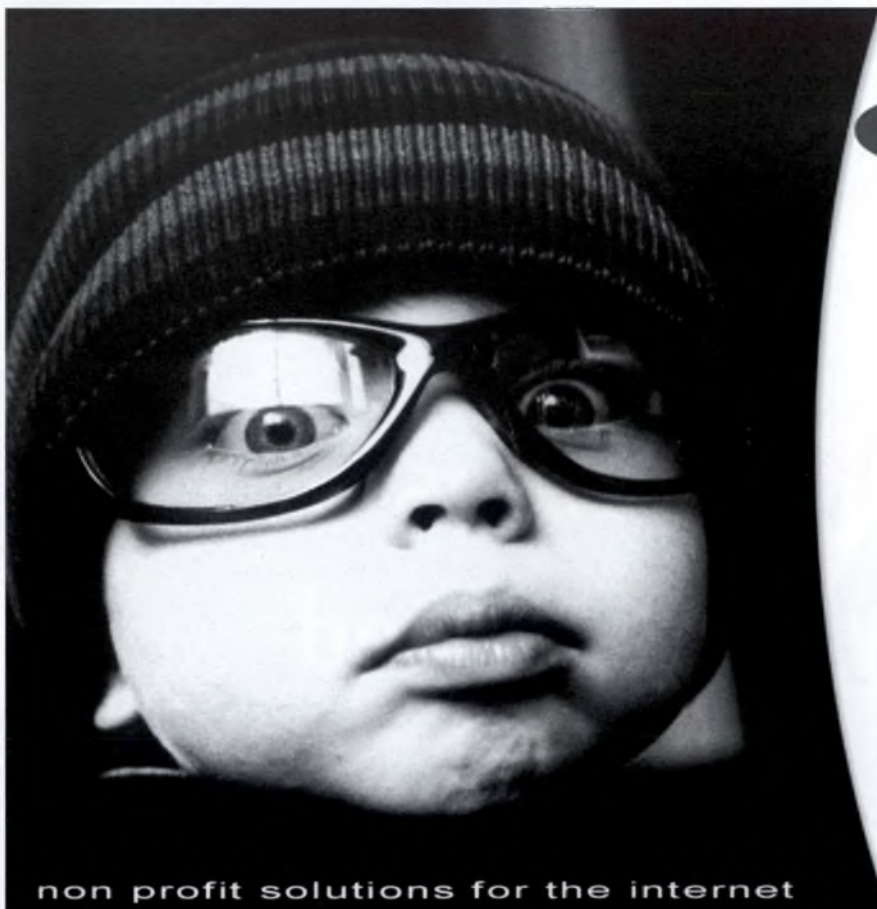
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PHIL FONTAINE: BACK TO THE FUTURE?

By now everyone knows that Phil Fontaine has been elected – for the second time around – as leader of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN).

The easy part is over for Fontaine, now he must get down to the nitty gritty of leading an organization that faces many challenges.

The first, and most critical, is the First Nations Governance Act. Criticized for his stance, or lack thereof, on Bill C-7, Fontaine made his stand clear in a press release categorically opposing the legislation a couple of weeks before the election.

"Long before the AFN took position on this, I told a forum at Queen's University that if the government wanted to amend the current legislation of the Indian Act, that First Nations had to be in control of the process or it would not work," Fontaine stated.

The election of Fontaine represents a changing of the guard, but also a return to the tried and true. A large majority of the 633 chiefs eligible to vote seem to have grown tired of Mathew Coon Come.

Coon Come's stance against Bill C-7 was defiant, and he was respected for it. But many considered his stance on other issues to be too strong. There seemed to be no room for open dialogue, and this ultimately led to his demise.

The defiance continued when Coon Come threw his support to Roberta Jamieson, leader of the Six Nations Mohawk reserve. Jamieson drew a respectable, almost 40 per cent share of the chiefs' votes, almost denying Fontaine a conclusive result (since national chiefs must gain 60 per cent to win). Had she won she would have become the first female leader of the AFN,

and the first Mohawk to boot.

Alas, this was not meant to be. But don't rule her out for the future, if Fontaine hasn't lived up to expectations.

Fontaine says he will make the AFN relevant again. But to do that will require big changes in the way the assembly is constituted. Universal suffrage among all eligible First Nations people would give the organization far more credibility in its struggles with Ottawa.

Secondly, the AFN's funding comes directly from the federal government. Again, this is something which doesn't bode well for the AFN's image, or their ability to fight their employers.

Those are the two main reasons why the AFN has difficulty in proving its "relevance." The AFN is essentially a glorified lobby group. With limited power, a controlled budget, and elected by a handful of chiefs, the AFN's legitimacy has always been in question.

Another issue Fontaine hopes to resolve is implementing treaty rights and fiduciary responsibility for housing. He claims to want to establish a comprehensive housing policy, and do something about the 8,500 houses which are needed "nation-wide."

But isn't that what the chiefs of each community are there for? Shouldn't they take care of their own backyard? They get paid enough to do just that, so why rely on a national chief?

In the past, Fontaine has been accused of kowtowing to the federal government. That was one of the reasons he had fallen out of favour three years ago. Now that the honeymoon with Coon Come is over, Fontaine once again appears to be the flavour of the month, at least for now. But as Coon Come learned, the flavour fades, and the taste left in peoples' mouths may prove to be more bitter than sweet.



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Fontaine, Ottawa, 2000

Photographer

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Mona Laviolette



The adventures of Wee Willie Nicholls

Once upon a time, there was a young Cree with great ambitions. He was going to take the computer world by storm and he had all the right credentials. Yes, he looked like Bill Gates. After completing studies in the then unknown world of computing and Basic language, he went to work at a local radio station, where he wreaked havoc with the airtime. His smooth-talking shows often warned the townsfolk of impending dangers, like who was coming to paint the town red during regional meetings. I even heard him tell the people to lock up the women and daughters because so and so was arriving. I used to think that Mistissini was a ghost town, until I heard the real truth, straight from the horse's mouth.

Yep, his name is Will and he's got the power. Many people think rather strangely of this brilliant man, but I know better. He's just a frustrated hacker who remembers the days when the ones who knew how to use a keyboard and type commands from memory are now just that, history and memories. And then, we introduced him to the teachings of Marconi and Bell and there was no looking back for him. The idea of communications and the power of the word never left him since that time.

Yes, he is Will Nicholls, intrepid editor of the *Nation*. Now where is Will today? He is somewhere in Ecuador or Chile or Peru. I understand that the people down there value someone like Will for his fair hair and skin. It's just the right complexion for a makeover South American style. In a way, I envy Will, because he gets to travel the world, usually at the request of others who need his skills.

Now, just what the heck would Will be doing in South America? Planning to join the other underdog forces and fight the governments? Search for the cure for cancer? Reforest the rain forest? Train guerrillas in Cree hunting and trapping tactics? Renegotiate and create a new North American and South American tax-free trade agreement? Create a new market for our floundering fur trade industry? Maybe he just wants cheaper coffee beans. Perhaps he has to increase the sales market of the *Nation*. Who knows? I just hope that he comes back in one piece so I can get paid for writing this column.

Speaking of this column, I haven't heard much from readers (except from the ones who drool) about Reznotes. I would like to know and hear from our dear readers (if there are any out there) about what you would like to see on this page, because sometimes I just get stuck with fresh ideas. I don't get to travel much and see the rest of Eeyou Istchee because we have no road allowing me the freedom to leave the beautiful north in a car or truck when I run out of toilet paper (which constitutes a family emergency and any reason will do). Or is it a conspiracy to keep me up here and completely out of touch with the rest of the free world. I could be protesting right now in Montreal against the World Trade Organization (WTO) alongside Aaron and Neil. If you look closely at the television news, you can see that they are wearing the traditional Cree woman's scarf hiding their features, a la Lasagna.

In any case, if Will ever returns with his fair complexion intact and hair still atop his cranium, the world must be ready for his return to glory as editor in chief of the *Nation*. This gives me the opportunity to return his favours as being the target of his editorial slings and arrows while he is still safely out of the country.

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CREE CONSTRUCTION FIRES PROTESTERS



Three workers for Cree Construction have been fired after organizing a protest over what they say is racism shown them by non-native superiors. The workers had been building access roads to Hydro Quebec's EM-1 project.

They organized a blockade June 20 of about 50 Cree Construction employees, including non-native workers, to protest inaction on their complaints by the project manager, Clement Jacques Tremblay, and the superintendent, Jean Yves Gauthier. The two were denied access to the site for the morning.

They delivered a list of demands to Cree Construction outlining the need for better communication (that the foremen should be able to speak English), calling for more native foreman and better training for natives, and zero tolerance for racism.

A few days later, Johnny Swallow, Allan R. Gull and Michael Coonishish were fired. The official reasons given by Cree construction for the firings was that their action constituted an illegal strike, that the individuals were troublemakers, and that it wasn't the first time they had given the company a headache. Gull says the justifications don't hold water.

"That was just an excuse," said Gull. "Those guys [Swallow and Coonishish] never did anything [wrong] in the past. For myself, I was trying to make things better for the people who were working there, and the people behind me who are looking for work with Cree Construction."

He also stated that as a foreman, he had expressed his concern over the treatment of his fellow Cree workers by some of the other foremen, most of whom only spoke French.

Mismanagement was rampant, he also charges, noting one incident in which a manager bought \$15,000 air-compressed seats for his pickup truck in order to be more comfortable.

Gull says a lot of money was wasted with no accountability. Yet when those issues were

brought to the forefront, they were largely ignored.

Numerous attempts were made to reach Cree Construction representatives for comment, but no one returned the Nation's phone messages.

Michael Coonishish, a bulldozer operator and one of the people to be fired, said that changes had to be made at the company. "I felt that Cree money was being misspent," he said.

Coonishish said there are big problems with the internal culture at the company. "I never felt a part of the company," he explained. "Other companies I worked for treated me better."

One worker still on the job (who wished to remain nameless) said that racism was so blatant it seemed to be normal. He said Crees were passed over for promotions, they weren't given the proper training and they had to deal with a hostile environment every day.

There was also rampant nepotism within the ranks, said Gull. "One of the higher ups had hired his sons, who weren't qualified for the job they were given," he said.

Gull warned that Cree construction shouldn't lose sight of the fact that they are owned by the Crees. "The whole Cree Nation are shareholders in Cree Construction, and I think they can do something about it," he said.

Despite the firings, these men got their point across. Today, most of their demands have been met, and some of the allegedly racist employees are no longer working there.

Gull said that he'd like to get his job back, but not if it means writing an apology.

"I only tried to do good for the company, I didn't do anything wrong," he said. "The unions [CSD, FTQ] said they are going to take Cree Construction to court and get us back pay starting from the day we were let go."

MASTY: MASTER OF 'MAGOOSTUI



In an election that produced no surprises, David Masty Sr. has been re-elected Chief for a second three-year term in Whapmagoostui. Masty won by a landslide, taking 209 out of 245 votes cast. His challenger for chief, Josie George, gained 32 votes.

In other races from the July vote, Frances George was elected as the woman councilor over Emily Masty, 150-94. Elected for terms as regular councilors were Robbie Dick Sr., John Mamianskum, Losty Mamianskum, Robbie Masty, and Robert Wynne. Elected for the position of elder councilor was Andrew Kawapit Sr. by 6 votes over nearest candidate Noah Sheshamush. Elijah Sandy was elected for youth councilor, edging Rachel Sheshamush by 4 votes.

Chief Masty Sr. says he is planning to retire after his new mandate expires in 2006. At that time he will be 61, and he hopes to leave politics for good.

Masty hasn't really thought about what he wants to do after being in politics for over 30 years, but suggested he might be interested in getting into translating, or any types of initiatives in protecting culture.

Masty had originally taken over the post as Chief in 1999 after Matthew Mukash resigned as Chief to tend to his duties as deputy grand chief on the Cree Grand Council.

Now that he has been re-elected, he hopes to bring the people together to try to combat social problems in the community. Working together to find solutions, he says, is the best way for the community to grow.

There are also councilors that were elected for the first time, and Masty said he wants to work hard to make sure everyone in the council is on the same track.

By Steve Bonspiel



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THE TRUE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE



Mohawk Poetess Pauline Johnson, a drunk with a British accent?

Natives refusing to register guns

Thousands of aboriginals across Canada are refusing to obtain gun licences and register their rifles and shotguns under the federal Firearms Act, according to government documents unearthed by the Canadian Alliance and reported by the *National Post*.

Justice Department surveys and briefing papers show that most aboriginal gun owners and their leaders oppose participation in federal licensing and registration because they want their own gun regulations and laws as a treaty right.

The documents were obtained by Canadian Alliance MP Garry Breitkreuz under the Access to Information Act. They also show widespread refusal by First Nations communities to take part in a 2002 government effort to help native communities comply with the Firearms Act.

In the Mohawk community of Akwesasne, a survey found only one per cent of gun owners had complied with the Firearms Act by last year.

The study, sponsored by the Akwesasne Justice Department and the Canadian Firearms Centre, found a majority of gun owners in the community support licensing but,

like the majority in the wider community, want it done under Mohawk law.

A 2002 sample of gun licence applications from 67 First Nations communities in Ontario, Quebec, the northern territories and the western provinces showed licences were sought by only a fraction of the expected number of gun owners in each community.

Breitkreuz said the studies show non-compliance by aboriginal gun owners and hunters undermines the integrity of the Firearms Act and Criminal Code provisions that cover the firearms registry.

The 2002 sample of compliance concluded that failure to take action or come up with a policy could be damaging to native hunters as well as relations between the aboriginal communities and law enforcement agencies. It said field reports showed aboriginal hunters and gun owners were being increasingly charged for gun possession without licences.

"This not only damages already sensitive police/aboriginal relations in many parts of the country but risks fines [which many aboriginal people are unlikely to have a capacity to pay] and the possibility of incarceration, which can only serve to fur-

ther increase aboriginal over-representation in the criminal justice system," the study said.

CBC trashes aboriginal poet

Pauline Johnson, (1861 - 1913) the Metis poet from a First Nations reserve in Ontario, was portrayed as a drunk with a British accent in a comedy sketch on CBC in Regina in late July. The program drew an official complaint, filed with the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code against CBC Regina's Noon Hour Edition program.

Aboriginal, anti-racism and social action groups in Regina are outraged at the portrayal of Pauline Johnson. The poet of the late 1800s was depicted as "just another drunk Indian woman," said Connie Deiter, a spokesperson for the ad hoc coalition.

Deiter, a First Nations writer in Regina, said the CBC acted "irresponsibly" by airing the two-minute segment. CBC is "trusted by the Canadian public," and should not have aired the piece.

Deiter is demanding an apology, especially to aboriginal women. "It was insensitive and denigrating that she was made to sound drunk, and was profiled as a well-colonized Aboriginal with a cultivated British accent," Deiter said.

Bill Gerald, Director of Radio and TV for Saskatchewan, called the reaction "unfortunate," and said the two-minute radio satire was "not meant to single out any ethnic group...nothing was directed at any particular race."

Gerald said the piece was meant to be satirical. "Satire can be subjective," he explained. "It was meant to be comedic, and as comedy it failed."

Pauline Johnson was the daughter of a Mohawk Native-Canadian father and an English mother. She used the Mohawk name Tekahionwake.

In the vignette, however, she was portrayed as a Victorian woman with a British accent, complaining about being sent to Regina for a reading tour in February, 1895.

In the segment, read by a male, Dwayne Brenna, Department Head for Drama at the University of Saskatchewan, the character's speech becomes progressively more slurred as if she was drinking.

"This program was introduced as entertaining and humorous, and then lead to a drunk Aboriginal icon who is well-respected role model in her community. Humour is not humour if it belittles and denigrates a person or a community, and it is obvious this was the intention," Dieter said.



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BC Judge quashes Native fishery

Native-only, commercial salmon fisheries are a form of racial discrimination and thus a violation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, a BC Provincial Court judge ruled last week.

In a landmark decision certain to have far-reaching implications for the West Coast's fishing industry, Mr. Justice William Kitchen declared native-only fisheries invalid because they discriminate against other commercial fishermen.

"Racial discrimination in our society takes on many guises," Judge Kitchen said, as he stayed charges against a large group of non-native fishermen for fishing illegally during a commercial salmon run open only to natives. "When racial discrimination, or any semblance of it, is identified, any continuance of it should not be permitted."

Since 1992, the controversial program allowed several native bands along the Fraser River exclusive rights to commercially harvest some returning salmon runs. But it has enraged commercial fishermen who have often had to tie up while native fishermen lower their nets. They charge the practice is nothing more than a race-based fishery.

Dozens of fishermen who crowded into the courtroom burst into applause as Judge Kitchen concluded his ruling, which effectively kills native-only commercial fisheries in the province, pending an appeal.

"Finally, justice," said one fisherman, as he left the courtroom. "Hey, wanna dance?" offered another.

Gillnetter Dale Armstrong's family has fished for three generations along the Fraser. "I'm very happy," he said. "I've sat on the beach for 10 years and watched [natives] catch the fish. It's just not fair."

But native leaders predicted trouble ahead if their exclusive fisheries are scrapped.

"They were originally conceived to relieve tension and confrontation on the river. Now we may be back to that scenario," said Arnie Narcisse, chairman of the B.C. Aboriginal Fisheries Commission.

He said aboriginal fisheries have brought "a hell of a lot of benefits" to native communities. "It was working. This is not a good day. In all frankness, I am pissed off and disappointed."

Judge Kitchen did not mince words in his lengthy judgment, which goes far beyond an earlier Provincial Court ruling that also criticized the policy of commercial native salmon fisheries. "It promotes the view that they [non-native fishermen] are

not as equally deserving of concern, respect and consideration as members of the [native] bands."

Clayoquot First Nation 'evicts' forest company

On the eve of the 10th anniversary of the Clayoquot Sound protests on the West Coast of Vancouver Island, the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation is handing an eviction notice to International Forest Products.

Tla-o-qui-aht councillor Simon Tom said hereditary chiefs say they want Interfor gone because the logging company is ignoring their concerns. "Our cultural values were not being respected," said Tom.

The province and company ignored the Clayoquot Sound Central Region Board when Tla-o-qui-aht representatives voted against a 10-year forest development plan. The company also wanted to re-assess cultural values in research cutblocks, he said.

Tom said the areas contain medicinal plants and culturally modified trees — trees that have markings or had bark removed in the past for such things as basket-making, Tom said. "We are looking to take over control and management of our resources and cultural values," he said.

However, the band also wants to maintain employment and economic opportunities for people on the coast, so they want to negotiate with the province about transferring control of the tree farm licence, Tom said. So far, there has been no reply from the province, he said.

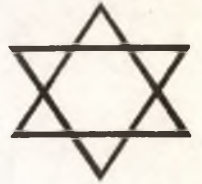
Tom would not speculate what would happen if Interfor moves in to harvest in the area. "Time will tell what is going to happen. We are preparing ourselves for any course of action."

Chief Moses Martin said the band has had enough and the only solution is for the Tla-o-qui-aht to manage the tenure themselves. "This logging tenure was given out decades ago without our consent and Interfor and the government continue to operate without meaningfully accommodating our interests," he said.

Ric Slaco, Interfor chief forester, said the company does not have anyone working in the Tla-o-qui-aht traditional territory, but long-term plans call for some harvesting in the area. Interfor's average annual harvest from Clayoquot Sound is about 120 hectares — .05 per cent out of the 260,000 hectares which makes up Clayoquot Sound, Slaco said. Of that, about 11 per cent is in the Tla-o-qui-aht traditional territory.

"The government and First Nations have

to sit down and work out a process because it would appear at this point we are caught in the middle," Slaco said. "It's difficult for us to have two landlords — both of them looking for money."



Natives look to Israel for lost spirit

Edwin Francis Jebb is looking to the people of Israel to revive the spirit of Canada's native children.

The education director of the Opaskwayak reserve in Manitoba left Toronto in July for Israel to look for inspiration in his people's own struggle for land, heritage and identity.

"The spirit of our children is broken," said Jebb, 51. "They have no desire to go on with their lives and we want to learn from the Jewish people how they can still live with great faith and spirit despite all the sufferings and intolerance that happened to them," he said.

"The Jews and the aboriginal people have a lot of common grounds. We both lost our own homelands and have faced racism and intolerance. Only education and communication can curb racism and intolerance."

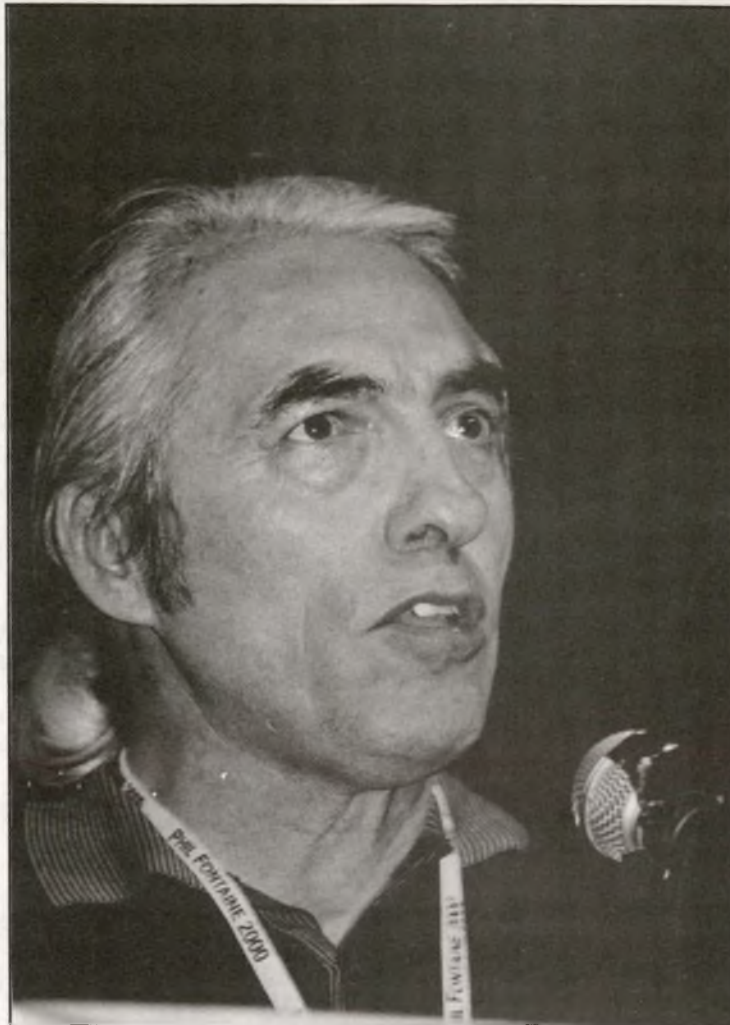
Jebb and eight other First Nations educators from reserves across Canada might have David Ahenakew, the disgraced aboriginal leader, to thank for the nine-day trip to Israel.

The former head of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and the Assembly of First Nations made headlines when he called Jews a "disease" who deserved to be destroyed by the Nazis.

B'nai Brith Canada and First Nations leaders met in Toronto to explore ways to heal the wounds between the two communities resulting from his remarks, and decided to dedicate all the spaces of this year's Holocaust and Hope trip for members of the First Nations.

The trip, first initiated two decades ago and paid for by B'nai Brith at \$3,500 per person, is offered once every two years for Canadian educators to learn about the Holocaust.

Who Is Phil Fontaine?



It's probably fair to say that most Cree people didn't follow national native politics very diligently until their native son Matthew Coon Come was elected National Chief. They'd heard of, thanks to our Mohawk brethren during the Oka Crisis, Ovide Mercredi. Chances are the only other prominent Indians they could named were Chief Dan George and Crazy Horse. They might have remembered, vaguely, Bill Erasmus, who served as national chief in the 1980's.

It was only when Coon Come defeated Phil Fontaine of Manitoba for National Chief in the year 2000 that many James Bay Cree heard, and quickly forgot, the name Phil Fontaine.

Now he's back.

Who is Phil Fontaine and why is his name French? And, according to Matthew Coon Come and many others, why is he so cozy with the Federal government? We won't even pretend to answer those questions here.

Larry Philip(Buddy) Fontainewas born at the Sagkeeng Anicinabe

Larry Philip (Buddy) Fontaine was born at the Sagkeeng Anicinabe Nation on the Fort Alexander Reserve in Manitoba on September 20, 1944. He received his first schooling at the Assiniboia Residential School in Winnipeg. He graduated from Powerview Collegiate in 1961. He was elected Chief of his home reserve in 1973 at the age of 28, serving a four year term. He majored in political studies and graduated from the University of Manitoba in 1981. In 1989, he was elected Grand Chief of the assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, a position he kept for three consecutive terms. He won by acclamation in 1991 and was reelected in 1994.

In 1997 Fontaine was elected National Chief. Unfortunately, nothing exciting was happening in native affairs at the time for Fontaine. The flames from Oka were smouldering, Burnt Church loomed. Internationally, Chiapas was a continent away. Bad news for any hungry Indian leader waiting to prove their spirit. Good news for an ambitious National Chief waiting to pounce on a Chief burdened by peace.

That man was Matthew Coon Come who snatched the spotlight from Phil Fontaine in Ottawa that fine summer evening of August, 2000. Fontaine could do nothing but retreat to a job at the Indian Claims Commission to regroup.

Matthew Coon Come had a reputation to live up to. Militant, Hydro Ass kicker. Minor World Celebrity. Expectations soon fell short. Matthew insulted party and non party animal chiefs and governments alike. The words, Drunk, Racist and Genocide oozed from press releases at 1 Nicholas St, in Ottawa. Fontaine listened to the chorus from holy Ottawa calling for the exorcism of this fiery tongued Cree demon and National Chief.

Fontaine would have understood the gauntlet Coon Come had to endure. His early years as Manitoba chief were not without their cries for his head. He'd been branded rebel, militant, criminal, incompetent before. Not only by the powers that were, but by his very own in Manitoba.

Manitoba was and surely is a special case in Native life. Its capital, Winnipeg, has the largest population of urban native people anywhere in Canada. Imagine a population of Quebec Cree, 70,000 strong, ghettoed in a city not too much larger than Val d'Or. And then, maybe, imagine, being their leader. Crime is rampant, Poverty even more rampant, Despair is overwhelming. Fire, death, destruction, drive-bys, prostitution and other imaginables are fodder, and entertainment, for daily news. What to do?

Cries for Fontaine's letter of resignation resounded when the press reported he had broke bread for peace with the chiefs of Winnipeg's police force and the Manitoba warrior Society in a fancy Winnipeg eatery. He survived that scandal unscathed to become National chief.

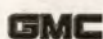
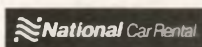
In the early 1990's, when he was still National Chief, Fontaine was one of the few leaders who would dare admit to the sexual and physical suffering he endured while "studying" in the government and church run schools.

Precious few of our leaders can endure the stings and sorrows of our native experience with that fortitude, dignity, and honesty today. In that way, I think, our Phil has proven himself.



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Back to the land

Coon Come faced impossible task at AFN

By Lyle Stewart

Three years ago this month, Matthew Coon Come walked into a packed Neoskweskau arena in his hometown of Mistissini to a hero's welcome. He had just been elected National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations and the pride in the prodigal son was palpable, with the 2,000 or so in the arena on their feet, clapping and cheering, shouting his name. The gala banquet featured gifts of a polar bear rug and a log cabin on the site of his choosing, music, and, of course, tributes and speeches.

"When I walked in here, I got to thinking about where I come from, where I grew up, and how I learned a traditional way of life," Coon Come said after taking the stage that was decorated with snowshoes and a teepee. "There was a time in our history when you were made to be ashamed of our culture," he added, when the Cree were thought of "as drunken Indians. I want to thank our elders for not being ashamed of our culture and for passing it on."

Coon Come may have had as many enemies working for his downfall at the AFN as he did in the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs.

It was a good performance, full of emotion and message. And the Cree, indeed First Nations people across the country, had high expectations. Not surprising, considering the success Coon Come had enjoyed in four terms as Grand Chief of the Cree. But the expectations were, perhaps, too high.

Everything came crashing back to earth last month, with a first-ballot defeat in the AFN elections, and the return to power of Coon Come's bitter rival, Phil Fontaine.

So what went wrong? How could things change so fast?

One clue might have been in the remark about "drunken Indians." The clean-living Coon Come recognizes the damage drink and drugs have done in the past to Native communities and their image across Canada. And he tried to show moral leadership early in his term as National Chief, noting that poor health on reserves is at least partly due to excessive drinking and smoking – and that the chiefs should set the example for their communities. Many in the AFN didn't appreciate the moralizing.

That incident, and disappointment over a lack of immediate progress on a number of issues, led to a phantom leadership challenge only a year after his election. It was easily defeated, but



it appeared to colour the rest of his term, as he swung from virulently attacking Ottawa (as at the Durban conference on racism) to trying to work with the feds, to no avail.

What became clear out of that motion of non-confidence at the 2001 summer assembly (even though the mover and second later denied having anything to do with it) is that the Chiefs in the AFN played hard-knuckle politics. And that Coon Come may have had as many enemies working for his downfall at the AFN – certainly many Fontaine supporters among them – as he did in the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs.

In Ottawa, Minister Robert Nault made it clear from the beginning he would not work with Coon Come, calling the AFN leadership "dysfunctional." Nault backed up his assessment by unilaterally cutting the AFN's budget in half. Indeed, Nault as much as demanded Coon Come be defeated this summer if there were to be any concessions from his department.

That put Coon Come in an impossible position. On one side, he had created expectations with his penetrating rhetoric about gaining control of resource revenues and changing the daily reality facing aboriginal peoples across the country. On the other, he had to work with the feds if he were to meet those expectations. The price from Ottawa was the First Nations Governance Act, legislation that is repugnant to many of the chiefs who elected Coon Come because of its perceived interference with their power.

Another de facto attack on their power was his proposal to have the National Chief elected by all First Nations people across the country. That would have removed his vulnerability to the chiefs, and at the same time given him far greater political legitimacy in dealing with Ottawa. Neither Ottawa nor the chiefs were greatly enthralled with either prospect.

Coon Come can take some consolation from the fact that Nault will not be Indian Affairs Minister in a few short months, and likely won't be in the federal cabinet at all. Paul Martin will soon be prime minister, and he has already stated his distaste for Bill C-7 – a clear expression of non-confidence in Nault's prime mandate at Indian Affairs.

So for now, Coon Come should take some time at his new log cabin to reflect on where he's come – and where he wants to go next. A man of his talents and experience has too much to offer his people, if not for the moment in national politics, to stay quiet for long.

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URBAN NATIVE

by tsa

I recently returned from spending two weeks researching eco-tourism and the indigenous people in Suriname. It's a small country located above Brazil next to French Guyana. Suriname is a former Dutch colony, which they acquired in a swap with Britain for New Amsterdam, now known as New York. The country itself has a population of less than half a million and most of them live in the capital city of Paramaribo. The people are a mixture of African descendents of the slave trade, East Indians, Indonesians and descendents of Dutch colonists. The official language is Dutch and everyone speaks "S'rnan Tango," a sort of Creole language from the slave period. Because of the popularity of American television, most people also speak a little English.

It's a truly wonderful country, with all flavours and all colours and very friendly people. My second day there I was hit by a moped as I tried to cross the road (like the British, they drive on the left side of the road). The driver made sure that I was okay before driving off, then the owner of a store came out and motioned me inside where he cleaned my wounds with rum and smothered an incredibly healing cream all over them. He even kept away the nosy onlookers. From there I wandered down the street into a gallery, which is located in the "Waaggebouw," or "weigh station." During colonial times, everything that came into or left the country had to go through the weigh station, even the slaves. There is a myth in Suriname that the slaves were weighed upon arrival, but I was told that wasn't true. Now it is a gallery run by a man named Bode (Bodie) who makes beautiful wood sculptures from mahogany and wengi wood. He has made benches, chairs, tables and many curvaceous women figures. He is known for patting them on the bottom when he is done! The gallery triples as a lounge/dance club on the weekends, where it is known as "the" place to go dance, and also runs a tourist outfit which offers tours to different parts of the country.

There are many beautiful places to visit in Suriname. Almost all of them are located in the interior, where a plane or a boat (or both) is required to get there. I went to the one tourist place located on the east coast of the country, that borders French Guyana. A two-hour boat ride away, it's called Galibi, which actually refers to the two Carib villages located on the coast. The Carib are one of five nations of Indigenous peoples in Suriname. They are well organized, actively involved in eco-tourism and

have preserved their culture and language. There were many character and physical similarities with the Cree and Ojibway. I was lucky enough to spend two days in the villages, sleeping in a hammock in a "tourist lodge." I met with the Chief, called the Captain, of the village as well as his grandfather, who is the head shaman of all the Indigenous in Suriname.

Alphonse began his training for Shamanism when he was still a young boy. Now he is a slight man of 82 years with failing health. He doesn't receive visitors or patients anymore but was happy to meet with an "indiaana" (Indian) from Canada. He only speaks his native tongue, Calinga, but when he found out I spoke French, he said we should try to speak in French. (Since the villages are a 20-minute boat ride across from French Guyana, there are Carib villages on both sides of the river. Many Carib, through intermarriage, move from one side to the other and conduct many ceremonies and feasts together. Alphonse grew up on the French side.) He laughed after 20 minutes of talking, saying that my French was not very good! He told me of this one man who had come from Europe and had been to all the best doctors in Europe and none could cure him of an unknown illness. Finally he happened to meet Alphonse, who located the area and source of the pain, then had his son, a shaman in training, cut through the man's chest, where Alphonse put his fingers in and pulled something out. The man was cured! These days he is concerned with passing on all his knowledge because he knows he is getting weaker and weaker.

It was with a very heavy heart that I left the Carib to go 30 minutes upriver to the eco-tourist location, called Babunsanti. It is a nature reserve and turtle-nesting area for five species of turtles, most notably the leatherbacks. It is a tiny place with four buildings for the tourists, researchers and employees. The first night as we strolled the beach we came across two leatherbacks nesting and I was in awe! These massive scary looking creatures are at least five feet long and weigh 600 kilos! They are a dark blue that almost looks like polished marble. They feel like marble too when you touch their shells or flippers. They move ever so slowly on land as they are carrying their own weight and only have flippers to move with. They push with their wide short back flippers and pull with their longer, thinner front flippers. When they find a place to nest they use their back flippers like shovels and dig a deep hole, then they drop between 80-100 eggs and cover it all up with such skill that you would think they have hands instead of flippers. Every 30 seconds they pause and gasp for air, emitting these eerie noises that sound as though it could be that of a dinosaur. After nesting they begin the slow descent back to the water, without even so much as a look back and disappear into the ocean. They repeat the whole process about seven or eight times a season, never seeing the hatchlings, of which maybe one of a thousand will survive into adulthood.

I witnessed eight leatherbacks nesting while I was there. It never failed to utterly amaze me. The size mixed with the skill and gentleness of their maneuvering, was simply humbling. The last night there, a curious turtle approached me slowly as I stood motionless watching it. It eyed me and moved closer until it touched my shoe with its front flipper. She then stopped, looked up at me and made her way back to the water. Later on I heard the sound of drums coming from the Carib on the French Guyana side. I looked up into a sky undisturbed by light pollution where thousands of stars were sparkling and could only sigh, at a loss for words.



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By James Frey

Nan Talese/Doubleday

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BY
MELORA KOEPEKE

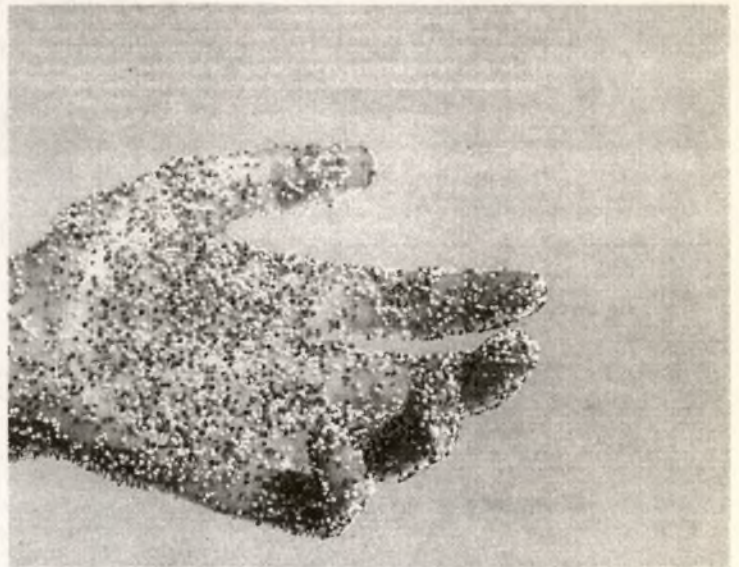
First of all, let me say that James Frey's *A Million Little Pieces* is an amazing book. A lot of the writing that I've read about drug and alcohol addiction does not do nearly enough justice to the complexity and the difficulties of addiction recovery. Frey is a 33-year-old American writer whose first book is an autobiography that deals with his (ongoing) struggle with intoxicants.

My problem with most "addiction memoirs" is twofold. First of all, addiction in our society is treated as a disease. And though we often find overviews of what different drugs and booze can do to us, we very rarely hear descriptions of why and how those drugs can be so effective and compelling. We often hear about how "terrible" being high is. But the truth is the opposite. By definition, being high usually isn't terrible at all – quite the opposite. That's why a drug habit is so hard to kick, and why James Frey gets it right by telling the story from inside his own head. There are reasons why drug users want and need to get high, and those are the reasons and the feelings that have to be confronted before an addict can even think about kicking the habit.

Frey manages to make you queasy with the truth about what his cravings were like. He makes you feel like never touching anything again.

"I want a drink. I want fifty drinks. I want a bottle of the purest, strongest, most destructive, most poisonous alcohol on Earth. I want fifty bottles of it. I want crack, dirty and yellow and filled with formaldehyde. I want a pile of powder meth, five hundred hits of acid, a garbage bag full of mushrooms, a tube of glue bigger than a truck, a pool of gas large enough to drown in. I want something, anything, whatever however as much as I can."

The title of Frey's book, *A Million Little Pieces*, refers to the day 10 years ago when our hero found himself on an airplane with a hole in his head and puking up pieces of his stomach, and no idea who he was or what had happened to him. Frey, a drug and alcohol addict since the age of 10, kicked his habits at Minnesota's famous



Hazelden treatment centre, where his rich and loving parents sent him after they picked up the pieces of him at the airport.

Sure, Frey grew up white and rich but he certainly doesn't come off as a spoiled brat. Actually, he's pretty energetic in his thinking. Here's a guy who takes on anything that he thinks is dishonest, knowing that a clear head and a clean slate are the only ways he's going to achieve what he has set out to do. This is a novel approach to getting clean.

Example: Many people think that the twelve-step program is the only way to get clean. When Frey goes into rehab, that's what they tell him. One of the steps in his 12-step program is that you have to give over your problem to a higher power. I've always wondered how that helps out atheists and assorted non-believers. In order to follow the 12 steps, they pretty much have to change their most fundamental belief systems, which, if it's dishonest, can't quite lead to getting your head on straight now, can it?

Frey, who is pretty tough and a scrapper, takes on everything in his path. Which brings us to the second interesting thing about Frey's approach: He doesn't believe in God and he refuses to compromise, so he takes on the 12-step system, inventing his own personal, totally accountable and relentless approach to getting clean.

For example, because of his commitment to his recovery centre's rules about narcotics, Frey submits to getting dental caps screwed into the bones of his face without anesthetic. This is pretty admirable, and also over-the-top and ridiculous. Frey is tiring and energizing at the same time: In all the grappling and chest beating and descriptions of daily bouts with the bloody contents of his own stomach, Frey starts to get a grip.

But not before the reader thinks, "I will never do a line again or have another drink again or smoke another joint again because if I ever, ever do, there's a vague possibility that I'll become as screwed-up as this guy, and have to go through all this to get clean."

Pretty powerful stuff.

Peter John Gull

June 10, 1943 – June 18, 2003

The family announces with great sorrow his death at the General Hospital in Montreal, Quebec on Wednesday June 18, 2003 at the age of 60, he was the beloved husband of Emily Gull.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Anna and William Gull; his sisters Maggie & Daisy Gull; his brothers Teddy & Philip Gull and 2 children.

He is survived by his loving wife, Emily Gull; daughters Sandra Happyjack (husband Teddy), Delores Gull of Waswanipi, Julie Pachanos-House & children (husband Ross) of Chisasibi.

Granddaughter Eleanor Gull and his great grandchildren Dawson Gull-Martinhunter and Latrell Gull of Waswanipi.

Dear Brother of Ella Gull of Waswanipi, Irene Gull of Magog, Norman Gull of Ottawa, Ontario, Jacob Gull, Samuel C. Gull, Henry George Gull and Leslie Gull of Waswanipi.

He leaves to mourn many nieces and nephews as well as numerous in laws, friends, colleagues and neighbors.

He will be remembered for his great devotion and service to his family, church and community.

In his years of involvement in the community of the Cree First Nation of Waswanipi as Chief for 12 years and as a member of the Council, he was involved in the relocation and the creation of the community and in the implementation of the economic development projects of the community.

He attended the Bishop Horden Memorial Residential School at Moose Factory, Ontario, Shingwauk Residential School, Anna McCrea Public School and the Sir James Dunn Vocational High in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario.



In Its beginning he was involved with the Grand Council of the Crees and the Cree Regional Authority and is one of the signatories to the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement of 1975.

He was also involved in the development of the Waswanipi community forestry industry and creation of the Nabakatuk Forest Products sawmill. In his years of involvement with Mishtuk Corporation and Nabakatuk Forest Products, he held various executive positions such as President, Vice-President and Director General.

He was a member of the St. Barnabas Anglican Church and held the office of the people's church warden.

Also Peter has received numerous accomplishment awards both on the local and regional levels. He was nominated for the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards. Under his leadership he received 3 Mishtapew Awards on behalf of the Apit-see-win Cooperative, Nabakatuk Forest Products and Mishtuk Corporation.

The family received friends, community members, business colleagues, members of the Quebec government for his funeral on Saturday June 21, 2003 conducted by the Rev. Barbara Nangle at 10:00 A.M. The burial took place at the cemetery of Chapais, Quebec.

The family wishes to thank the people who expressed their sympathies and sorrow during this time. Also to the many individuals who volunteered during the funeral and supper, truly the family was overwhelmed by your contribution. Condolences may be sent to the family at 1 Tamarack Street, Waswanipi, Quebec J0Y 3C0.

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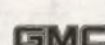
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Picking up the new canoe

Xavier Kataquapit

Freighter canoes are important vehicles that are used to make life easier on the James Bay coast. The rivers are our highways and these canoes provide our transportation. Just about every canoe bought up north is a canvas covered wooden boat purchased from the Northern Store. These boats come at a great cost and are highly valued by my people.

Our family went through several freighter canoes while I was growing up. Dad sometimes bought new canoes from the store. Other times he had to settle with a used boat depending on our economic situation at a given time and the high cost of new craft.

One year he dealt with friends and relatives in Fort Albany and he cut a deal on a large 24 foot freighter canoe for a good price. The only problem was that it had to be transported back to our community which was about 100 kilometers away. Dad also managed to sell our old canoe to someone in Fort Albany, so this meant an adventure on the river and the open waters of the great James Bay. Happily, dad considered that at the ripe age of 12 I could accompany him on this adventure. We had no time to waste as dad was busy with several projects on the go so a weekend trip was hastily planned.

On an early Saturday morning we rose with the sun and got our boat ready for the long journey. Although it was only a short trip we packed some warm clothes, rain suits and a tarp to keep warm and dry. We also brought along a thermos of tea, some sandwiches and enough gas to last the trip to the Albany River. It was one of those perfect summer days with a cloudless, pale blue sky. I felt safe and excited as dad expertly guided the boat along the Attawapiskat River and then out onto the bay. Under the power of our 40 horsepower Johnson the light canoe rose out of the water with each crest of wave. This was a different experience for me. It was just myself and dad out on our own. It felt good to be moving through the wind and ocean spray with the fragrance of sea salt in the air.

In a matter of four hours we arrived at the Albany River. I could tell that all of this was easy for my dad as he knew the route like the back of his hand. We pulled up to the muddy banks of Fort Albany and made the climb up to the top where Antoine Edwards, dad's cousin was waiting. Although we were here to do business it was also a time to visit family and friends in Fort Albany. We made the rounds and caught up on all the news and goings on. Finally with our new canoe we headed back out onto the water.

Dad had taken the time to have a good look at the new canoe and he had established some weakness that he pointed out to me. He noted that the gunnels were not made from one long piece of wood but that they were spliced. He explained that in time due to the demanding conditions on the open waters of the bay this design would not hold up. He had some other little concerns but generally he was pleased with his new canoe.

We made good time and managed to near the community just as dark fell. It was cool now and much more difficult for me to figure out where we were. Thankfully, my dad knew exactly where we were even in the dark. A full moon helped illuminate our way even though the sky was overcast. I was worried but dad assured me that the faint white glow on the horizon was indeed Attawapiskat.

To determine where the river cut into the land dad poked his paddle into the water continuously until he found a deep channel. This was a small creek known as Akik Seepee (Sea River) which we knew would lead us to the Attawapiskat River.

Out of the dark we came steadily along the river until we reached the banks of the community. I had a good story for my mom and my brothers and sisters and we all had the benefit of a new canoe that would bring us countless hours of use and pleasure. On this night, life was as good as it could be.

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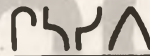
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In Memoriam Peter John Gull

June 10, 1984 – June 18, 2003



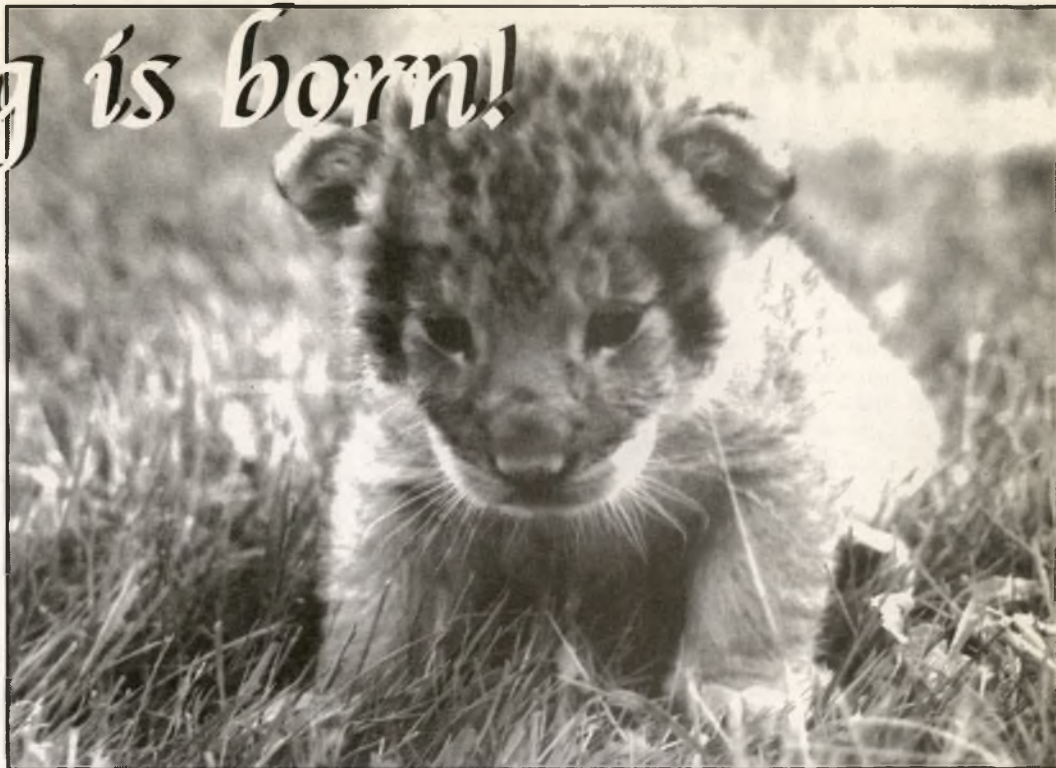
Peter's life has been an example for us. We wish to express our gratitude and thankfulness for his encouragement towards us to reach out for our goals and dreams. We can truly say we have been witness to the special characteristics that legends are made of.

Peter was the Director General and President of Mishtuk Corporation and the Vice-President of Nabakatuk Forest Products.

He will be sadly missed by all the employees of Mishtuk Corporation and Nabakatuk Forest Products



A King is born!



The king of the jungle roars for his food at Parc Safari in Hemmingford, QC.

Born on May 31st, 2003, the little king is the centre of attention displaying an abundance of cuteness. The little king must be handled like a newborn baby drinking formula from a bottle and establishing a bond with his human mother Sophie Robidoux, A protective mother, Sophie made us clean our hands with bacterial soap before we were allowed to pet

him. We heard him roar his complaints after being kept up past his usual after dinner nap.

Sophie is an experienced foster mother, having reared the king's two sisters who were born last year. The young

lionesses, Maish and Kiwanja are delightful to watch as they play like two kittens.



The king will be exhibited in the new Arche de Noé along with this year's youngsters. Amongst other newcomers are the lovable baby wolves and alpacas. There are many new attractions at Parc Safari geared to our understanding of animals and insects in their habitats. The insectarium is very informative displaying a large collection of live insects. Your thoughts of who roams in the forests of Quebec will change! There are six new rides and more pools and camping too. Great place for a family to spend a day or two...Open until 10PM every-day! Half price from 16h00.



CLASSIFIEDS

100 - BIRTHS

I WANT TO WISH A HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO MY DADDY, SONNY ORR AND MANY MORE TO COME. I LOVE YOU AND YOU LOVE ME...LOVE ROSEMARY. BY THE WAY, HIS BIRTHDAY IS JULY 21 AND HE IS #5 YEARS OLD.

I want to congratulated Kevin & Emma Gunner on there first daughter was born on July 20, 2003, Weight 8,6 lbs. I'm so happy for you both and Adrian. So Adrian take a good care of your little sister she will look at you a lot and be inspire and want to be like you. Emma now you can say you have a daughter, cause you always said you're so lucky to have a girl now you have one. Oh! You need a babysitter call me. God bless you and your family &

remember God answer prayers. From: Irene & Family from Waswanipi.

Congratulations to Flora Otter and Jonathan Sutherland of Waswanipi. Welcome to your son Corey Matthew who came to this world in January 25, 2003. I pray Our Creator will take care and protect you throughout your life, Sweet Lovable Corey. You fill my heart with love. Love Kookum Lily Gull Sutherland in Waswanipi.

101 - BIRTHDAYS

Wow!! It was 9 years ago when you arrived into this world, and in grade 5 this fall. Israel, You are my pride n'joy. You make me so proud. I cherish every moment that i spend with you even though you tell me not to hug you in public or embarrass you in front of your friends. My son, please take your time in

growing up, sometimes I think you're growing up to fast. I wish you could remain my little man forever. **Happy Birthday on July 31st son, with all my heart; love MOM. Oh how I miss the words MOMMY.**

Happy Birthday to my older brother Harry and sister Weena. One is on the 20th and the other on the 24th of August. Can't remember which is which but hey atleast I remembered to wish you the best on your birthdays. Love, Emily and the boyz and of course Seven-Chantay.

I would like to wish my nephew Thomas Petagumskum a Happy 9th Birthday on July 22nd. May you get what you want on your birthday. Love always, your auntie in Whapmagoostui. X0x0x0

Happy 8th Birthday on August 3rd to Neebin Wabiquin from

Whapmagoostui. You are growing up so fast, it seems like yesterday we had brought you home from the hospital. You are a true blessing for us, we love you so much. And we do remember, no adults at your birthday party this year. Love always and forever, Mom & Dad.

I would like to wish Happy Belated Birthday to my two crazy brothers who still think I am a millionaire. Donny on July 11 and Sam on July 17. Only if I had a million dollar, I still wouldn't give you any (just kidding) from your sista, Ruby.

I would like to wish a Happy Birthday to my friends from Whapmagoostui. Emily-anne F. on July 13th and Joan-marie G. on July 19th. Hope you two have fun! From Christa B.

We would like to say Happy

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CLASSIFIEDS

2nd Birthday to our daughter Faith Wynne in Kashechewan, Ontario. We love you so much, our only daughter. We thank God for you and for His blessing. Love, Stanley, Jennifer and brothers x0x0x0

Happy Birthday to Quentin Kooseses on August 21st. Happy 7th Birthday son, you've grown so much and each day our love grows bigger for you. I thank God I have a smart son and we love you Quentin. Love always, Stanley & Jennifer, brothers and sister.

I Jennifer would like to say Happy Birthday to Stanley Wynne in Kashechewan, Ontario on August 17th. I love you and I thank you and appreciate you cooking and watching the kids while I work to support us. You've done so much to help this family. We love you so much. Love always, Jennifer, Quentin, Conroy, Tyler, Faith x0x0x0

104 - GRADUATIONS

I would like to congratulate my sister, Frances Couchess on her recent graduation from her Secretarial/Medical Studies program from Riverside Technology Centre in Montreal. Congratulations Frances, I am very happy for you. Also, I would like to congratulate my brother, Bentley Mianscum on his recent graduation from Sabtuan Education in Heavy Equipment Mechanic Course. Congratulations Bentley and good luck in the future. With

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much love and respect, your sister, Margo M. Cooper in Ouje-Bougoumou.

We want to congratulate our son, Dion Mianscum, who recently graduated from Secondary V at Waapihtiwewaw School. We are very proud of you, boy. It takes a lot to set your sights on a distant horizon and keep on reaching for your goals. It takes a lot of courage and hard work, believing and achieving, patience and perseverance, inner strength and gentle hope. It takes a lot of giving it your best and doing the fantastic things you do. But most of all it takes someone as wonderful as you. Congratulations on your graduation son, we are very proud of you. Love, Mom and Dad in Ouje-Bougoumou.

Congratulations to our brother, Dion Mianscum, who graduated from Secondary V. You are our hero and our role model. We promise to do our best in school to make you proud as you had made us proud seeing you graduate. We love you and do your best in College. Love, your sisters, Nicole & Sarah Cooper, in Ouje-Bougoumou.

We would like to congratulate our daddy and husband Brian, who is graduating from Fire Etc. Firefighting training center in Vermillion, Alberta. Well, you made it. Even though sometimes it was hard to be away from us. We are so proud of you! So now you are a professional, no more of that volunteer stuff. Once again, CONGRATULATIONS!! Love, Ruby, Boo-doo, Bouj-wab,

Buya-yint and Jug-Jii.

300 - PERSONALS

Congratulations to the student council of Voyageur Memorial School; ELIJAH SHECPAIO - PRESIDENT, STACEY NEEPOSH - VICE-PRESIDENT, NIKAMOON MITCHELL - TREASURER, JENILLIE SHECAPIO - SECRETARY AND GIDEON ISERHOFF - EXECUTIVE MEMBER, 125 for making a difference in the school. You guys were great. You did a great job!

Correction: An error was made on the list of students who graduated from Voyageur Memorial School. Maggie Longchap, French Sector, was mistakenly identified as Maggie Brien. We regret any error.



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